

*Bureau of Legal and Regulatory Services
Michigan Department of State*

*Consumer's
Automotive
Information &
Complaint Kit*



When You Have A Complaint. . .

There is something you can do about misrepresentation, unsatisfactory repairs and unnecessary delays by an automobile dealer or repair shop in Michigan.

This brochure, published by Michigan's Department of State, tells you how to complain effectively about a repair job or new or used vehicle sale.

The Department's Bureau of Legal and Regulatory Services was established to license and regulate car dealerships and repair shops, investigate complaints and provide consumer information.

This brochure may help you solve a complaint directly with the business involved. If you cannot reach a satisfactory settlement, you may fill out the attached form to receive assistance from the Bureau of Legal and Regulatory Services.

For further explanation of your rights as a consumer, read the other Bureau of Legal and Regulatory Services brochures listed on the opposite side.

■ The First Step: Talk To The Manager

When you have a problem, talk to the owner or business manager about it right away. When you bring a problem to the manager's attention, you may be able to work out a settlement.

Keep these five points in mind when you talk to the business owner or manager:

- 1) Be courteous and calm.
- 2) Explain the problem accurately. Provide dates, estimated or billed amounts and as many other facts as you can.
- 3) State what you think is a fair settlement or correction.

- 4) State whether you are willing to negotiate; in many disputes neither side is 100 percent correct.
- 5) If you cannot get a satisfactory settlement, you may wish to tell the business that you will file a complaint with the state.

■ The Second Step: Contact The State

If you have talked to the owner or manager and have not reached a satisfactory settlement, contact the Bureau of Legal and Regulatory Services.

Use the attached form to briefly state your complaint. Attach copies of documents to the signed complaint and mail or fax to the address on the bottom of the complaint form.

There are some areas in which the bureau has no authority to investigate or mediate. If so, you will be advised. You may be directed to another agency or to the court system. Other sources of assistance and information are listed in this brochure.

If your complaint is within its authority, the Bureau of Legal and Regulatory Services will investigate. A copy of your complaint may be forwarded to the business for its response.

The business may contact you to try to resolve your complaint. You may negotiate a settlement or wait for investigation. Please advise the bureau of any settlement you reach.

The bureau's goal is to give prompt, quality service. Complaints are generally investigated in the order in which they are received. An investigator will contact you by telephone, e-mail, postal service, or in person to follow up.

Some complaints involve failure by a dealer to provide title in the purchaser's name or a dispute of a garagekeeper's lien. In such cases, the bureau will attempt to contact you within a few days after receiving your complaint. Other issues may take longer to resolve.

Automotive Repair Tips

Under Michigan law, when you have repairs done to your vehicle or trailer, you have the right to:

- An itemized written estimate **before** any repairs are started that will cost \$20 or more.
- Know about and approve (or refuse) any work done beyond the estimate.
- Have repairs made by a Michigan-certified mechanic.
- An itemized final bill.
- Receive or inspect all replaced parts. Be sure to ask for them when you pick up your vehicle.

If you believe that a garage is pressuring you into unneeded repairs, insist on a written explanation of the problem. If the repair shop will not return your vehicle immediately when you refuse its recommended service, telephone the bureau.

Buying A Vehicle

When buying a vehicle from a dealer, consider the purchase price as well as the terms of finance, warranty, and the cost of a service contract and credit insurance.

Every used vehicle offered for sale by a dealership must have a statement of warranty on the driver's window, even if the vehicle is not warranted. If you leave a deposit on a vehicle, you may not be entitled to a refund if the purchase is not completed.

Dealers are required to apply for your title, purchase or transfer plates, collect 6 percent Michigan tax, provide mileage disclosure and give you copies of all documents you sign at the time of signing.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AUTOMOTIVE COMPLAINT

Please read the attached brochure before filling out this form.

For office use only.

Number		First Five Letters		Open Date		Open		Case #	
R	Office Close Date	Close	CI	Field Close Date		Close	FI	Mail Program	
\$ Recovered		Violations		Office Use Only					
Mechanic/Agent Number		Code	Code	First Three		Mechanic/Agent Number		Code	Code

Your Name and Address:

Best time to call:

Home Telephone:

()

Work Telephone:

()

E-mail Address:

Name and Address of the Business or Person You Wish to File a Complaint About:

Business Telephone:

()

Persons you dealt with at the business:

Complaint: VEHICLE REPAIRS	Complaint: VEHICLE SALES										
Transaction Date:	Purchase Date:										
Vehicle Year: Make: Model:	Vehicle Year: Make: Model:										
Vehicle Number (VIN):	Vehicle Number (VIN):										
Circle all answers that apply to your repair transaction:	Circle all answers that apply to your sales transaction:										
Did you receive a written estimate prior to repairs? Yes No	Type of Sales Transaction:										
Did the facility only perform the repairs you authorized? Yes No	<table> <tr> <td>Sale</td> <td>Sale</td> <td>Odometer</td> <td>Salvage</td> <td>Lease</td> </tr> <tr> <td>New</td> <td>Used</td> <td>Rollback</td> <td>Vehicle</td> <td>Vehicle</td> </tr> </table>	Sale	Sale	Odometer	Salvage	Lease	New	Used	Rollback	Vehicle	Vehicle
Sale	Sale	Odometer	Salvage	Lease							
New	Used	Rollback	Vehicle	Vehicle							
Did the facility provide you with a final invoice? Yes No	Did you get copies of the documents you signed? Yes No										
Do you have the parts the facility replaced? Yes No	Did you get more than one temporary registration? Yes No										

Important! Copies of all invoices, receipts, and related documents must be attached. Remove credit card and personal account references on supporting documents. Please do not send original documents. Briefly describe your complaint below or attach your letter of complaint:

(Use back side if more space is needed.)

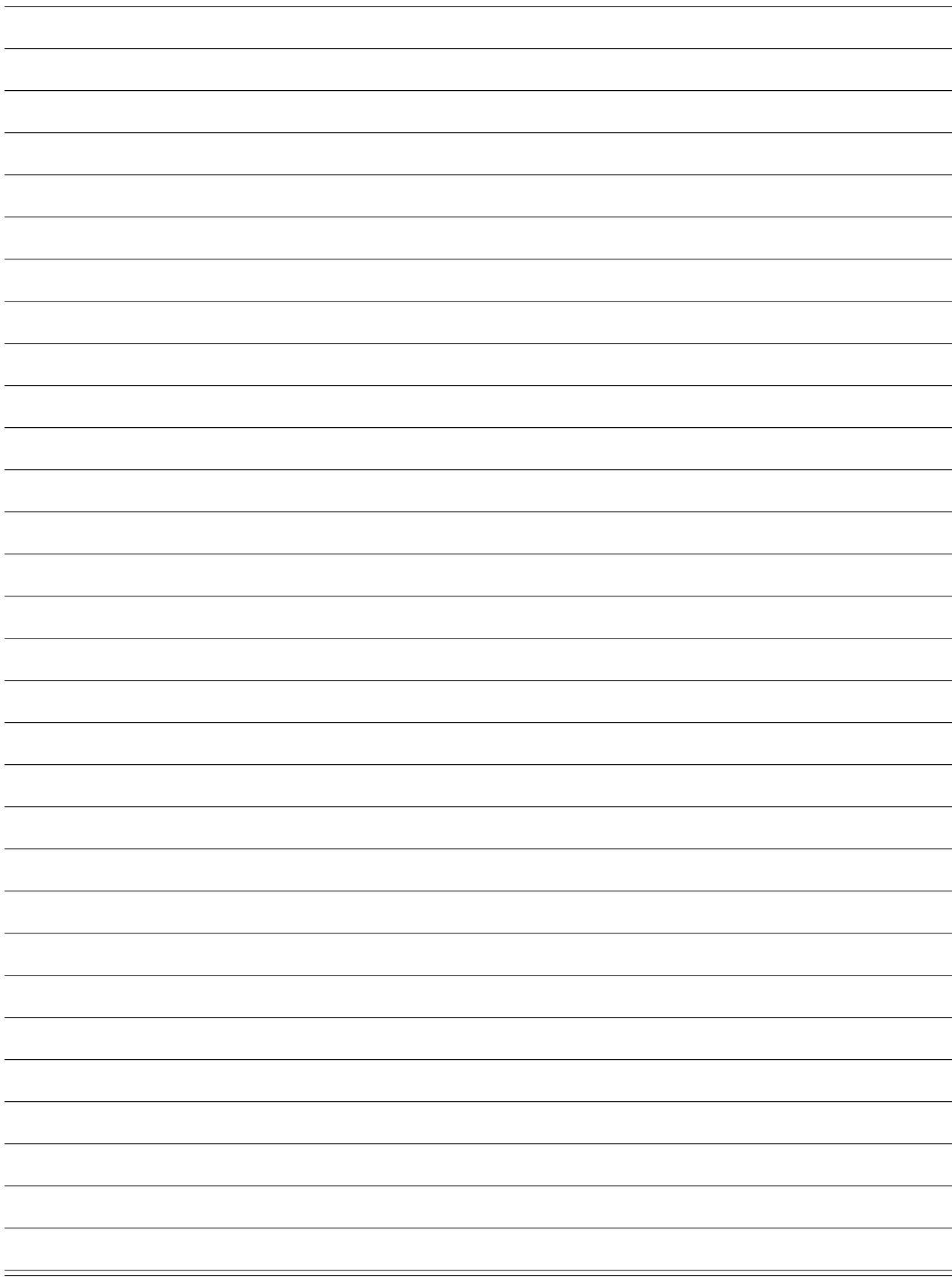
Please suggest a fair settlement:

Your Signature:

Date:

Return by Mail: Bureau of Legal and Regulatory Services, Michigan Department of State, P.O. Box 30046, Lansing, MI 48909-7546
Return by Fax: 517/373-8791 BLRS web site: www.michigan.gov/sos

tear here



Other Sources for Answers to Auto-related Questions

Subject	Agency to Contact
Auto design and equipment (unsafe or defective), recalls	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Washington, D.C. 20590 Auto Safety Toll-free Telephone: 800/424-9393
Driver license, vehicle title and registration	Contact your local Secretary of State branch office. (Listed under Michigan State Government in your telephone book.)
Auto insurance coverage problems	Michigan Insurance Bureau, P.O. Box 30220, Lansing, MI 48909-7720 Attn: CIAD Telephone: 517/373-0240
"Lemon Law" and unresolved warranty issues	Michigan Attorney General Consumer Protection Division P.O. Box 30213, Lansing, MI 48909 Telephone: 517/373-1140
New vehicle warranties, questions on warranty coverage, claims	If your dealer cannot help, contact the manufacturer's regional office. (See owner's manual or ask dealer.) Better Business Bureaus can also handle some warranty complaints.

Additional automotive brochures published by the Department of State:

Auto Repair Rights and Repair Tips

*Consumer's Guide to Automatic
Transmission Service*

*Consumer's Guide to Brake Repair
Service*

*Consumer's Guide to Buying a
Vehicle from a Dealership*

Consumer's Guide to Collision Repairs

*Consumer's Guide to Private
Vehicle Sales*

Consumer's Guide to Vehicle Leasing

Consumer's Guide to Vehicle Restoration

*Consumer Tips When Buying a
Vehicle*

Brochures are available at Secretary of State branch offices, through fax-on-demand at 517/335-4FAX, or by telephoning the Bureau of Automotive Regulation.

Bureau of Legal and Regulatory Services

Michigan Department of State

P.O. Box 30046

Lansing, MI 48909-7546

Telephone: 800/292-4204

TTY: 517/485-5530

www.michigan.gov/sos

**Secretary of State
Michigan**

SOS-197 (4/99) • 35,000; \$2,628; \$.08
Printed under authority of P.A. 300 of 1974